

5 April 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT:

Herewith a biographical rundown on   
the man I mentioned to you last night and whom I recom-  
mend you appoint as a member of the Board of National  
Estimates. You will see from the attached that he  
has been pretty solidly associated with economics since  
his undergraduate days at the University of California.

SHERMAN KENT  
Assistant Director  
National Estimates

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NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐  
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24 JUN 1980

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CONFIDENTIAL

4 April 1962

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR**

**SUBJECT: Check of Information on Soviet Military Strength**

**REFERENCE: DCI Memorandum of Discussion at NSC Meeting of  
28 March 1962**

1. We have reviewed our information on Soviet military strength. Although adjustments in IOC dates or numbers for certain weapons categories are presently indicated, we find no evidence on which to base a significant change in our assessment of overall Soviet military strength. A series of new Soviet military estimates now in progress is tentatively scheduled for completion within the next five months.

**STRATEGIC DELIVERY FORCES**

2. In existing national estimates, we have projected Soviet ICBM strength for mid-1962 at 35-50 operational ICBM launchers of all types. In addition, the USSR probably has about 35 submarines equipped with a total of nearly 100 short range ballistic missiles. These submarines, of which eight are estimated to be nuclear powered, are all capable of attacking the US. As to major missile systems capable of attacking European and other areas peripheral to the Bloc, we have estimated that some time in the 1962-1963 period, Soviet strength in operational

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launchers equipped with medium range ballistic missiles would reach a total of 350-450.

3. Evidence acquired to date supports the general ranges of figures given above. It tends to confirm our belief that each Soviet land-based launcher has more than one missile available to it so as to provide a refire capability. We still lack confirmation of our estimate that, by mid-1962, small numbers of IRBM launchers will be operational in the USSR.

4. Present evidence points to no important change in our estimate that in mid-1962 Soviet Long Range Aviation will possess about 160 heavy bombers and about 900 medium bombers, some of them equipped with air-to-surface missiles. However, we cannot yet confirm our estimate that the medium bomber force will include a small number of new bombers capable of supersonic "dash."

#### GROUND FORCES

5. We continue to estimate that Soviet ground forces comprise approximately 150 line divisions, about 90 of which are believed to be combat ready; this level will probably be maintained for some time to come. Recent evidence indicates no major change in deployment patterns over the past year and no resumption of the force reductions publicly

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suspended in the summer of 1961. Continuing large-scale modernization programs are expected to keep Soviet ground forces at a high level of proficiency and technical preparedness for nuclear and non-nuclear war.

#### NAVAL FORCES

6. Available evidence generally supports existing estimates of the strength and composition of Soviet naval forces. The bulk of the Soviet submarine force still consists of conventional long-range submarines, about 250 in all, and we believe that this force will generally remain constant. It is still not possible to state incontrovertibly that the USSR has any nuclear submarines at all. However, the interpretation of a substantial body of evidence brings us to estimate that twelve submarines in the Soviet fleet are nuclear propelled; eight of these are equipped with missiles. In addition to submarine-launched ballistic missiles, a cruise-type missile previously estimated to be under development for submarine use is probably now operational; several conventional submarines appear to have been modified for its use.

7. Other developments in the Soviet naval forces reflect continuing concern with defense against US carrier task forces and missile submarines. Virtually all naval medium bomber units are now believed to be equipped with anti-shipping air-to-surface missiles, considerably improving their capabilities against surface forces. We believe, however, that Soviet ASW capabilities beyond coastal waters will be severely

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## AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS

8. The USSR continues its massive deployment program of SA-2 surface-to-air missile sites for defense against medium and high altitude attack. We previously estimated that about 450 sites would be deployed around urban-industrial areas; the Soviet program, as yet incomplete, appears to be roughly of this magnitude. In addition, SA-2 deployment is continuing at long-range missile launching complexes, near key point targets, and with field forces. The estimated deployment of a new surface-to-air missile system (SA-3) for defense against low altitude targets was confirmed during 1961; about 10 SA-3 sites have been identified to date.

9. We continue to receive evidence that the USSR is engaged in a major program to develop a defense against ballistic missiles and that more than one anti-missile system is being developed. The scope and pace of this program supports our estimates that at least limited deployment of antimissile defenses will begin in the next few years.

## NUCLEAR WEAPONS

10. We believe that no major change has occurred in the size or composition of the Soviet nuclear weapons stockpile over the past year. It almost certainly consists largely of weapons developed prior to the 1961 test series, and, although the supply of fissionable material has increased, recent revisions of previous appraisals will lead to a somewhat reduced figure for the 1962 stockpile. In 1961, the coming

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estimate. However, the recent Soviet test series was by far the largest, most intensive and comprehensive ever conducted by the USSR. It is clear that the Soviets have made significant advances in weapon design and technology, particularly in the thermonuclear field. The tests probably also gave the Soviets increased confidence in current weapon systems and contributed vital weapon effects knowledge. Some of the weapons tested could now be stockpiled, and others will probably enter the stockpile over the next year or so. Availability of fissionable materials continues to impose limitations on the numbers of stockpiled weapons, but production of these materials probably will increase. Thus, we estimate a general upgrading in the quantity, variety, and yields of Soviet nuclear weapons over the next few years.

SHERMAN KENT  
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National Estimates

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